

AT A GLANCE: Indian Children in Washington State

Taken from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee Report

Racial disproportionality exists for American Indian children in the Washington State Child Welfare System.

American Indian children are almost three times as likely to be referred to Child Protective Services (CPS) as opposed to White children.

Disproportionality is consistently greater for mandated reporters such as health care workers, educators, police officers and court officials. But it is observed even among non-mandatory reporters who are most often relatives, friends or neighbors.

The greatest disproportionality for American Indian children occurs when:

- The initial referral to Child Protective Services (CPS) is made.
- The decision to remove the child from home is made.
- A child is in care for over two years.

In 2004, mandated reporters submitted about 60 percent of all referrals to CPS. 80 percent of children removed from home were referred by mandated reporters.

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Compared with White children referred to CPS in 2004, after referrals:

- Indian children were 1.6 times as likely to be removed from home.
- Indian children were 2.2 times as likely to remain in foster care for over two years.

For American Indian children, after referral certain decisions appear to contribute to disproportionality. Compared to White children, American Indian children are:

- More likely to be removed from home.
- Less likely to reunify with parents within two years.
- Less likely to be adopted within two years.

In 2004, 80 percent of American Indian children in foster care were living in single-parent homes at the time of referral to CPS.

Some of the disproportionality for American Indian children can be accounted for by factors other than race. At the point of removal from home, 25% of the disproportionality can be explained by poverty, family structure, and case characteristics.

This information is based on Children's Administration data from 2004.

This report can be found at <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/pubs/disproportionReport.asp>

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